

Fw: town hall name

Christine Dibble <christinedibble@outlook.com>

Tue 2/20/2024 9:23 PM

To: Christine Dibble <christinedibble@outlook.com>

Kathy, could you please send the following to the mayor and town council members? Thanks.
Mimi

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."-- L.P. Hartley, 20th century British novelist

Can we judge individuals for accepting prevailing values of their culture? We are all shaped by the time and place we live in. Future generations will look at us with disgust and disdain. How could we have eaten meat by killing sentient beings? spent or hoarded assets while others suffered? befouled the air, the land, the water while building doomsday weapons?

The heroic among us don't drift along. They take stands and do great deeds. But even they pick their battles and can't fix everything at once. Some things that are badly broken they don't recognize as needing fixing at all. Heroes have human faults too.

Roy McCathran envisioned an enduring, self-governing town in a forest, and he worked hard for decades to create it, to our benefit. We now judge him for blackface performances (dehumanizing, and common in his culture); for restrictive covenants (abhorrent, and common in his culture) to which we don't know the extent of his contribution; and for unsubstantiated words attributed to him by Rosalie Shantz, a granddaughter of Major Walker, who had a stance on contentious issues different from McCathran's.

I do not feel we should withdraw the honor bestowed on Roy McCathran for his devotion to Washington Grove on this basis. Consider George Washington: general, national founder, first president, enslaver. Shall we decide if his deeds outweigh his moral failings? Shall we change the name of our town? As a symbolic gesture, that would have more force.

I support the continuing work of RASEC and the town to understand the part we have played in systemic racism, to increase diversity and interracial understanding, and to reverse the effects of racism, but I urge council members to vote against changing the name of the town hall.

Mimi Bolotin